

Credit Transfer and Recognition of Prior Learning Policy and Procedure

1 Purpose and scope

The purpose of this policy is to set out processes for credit transfer and Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) for higher education degree courses at AIE Institute. This policy outlines processes that align to the recommendations in the Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) for the granting of credits through credit transfers and RPL.

This policy applies to all staff members in charge of assessing RPL applications for AIE Institute.

2 Objectives

The objectives of this policy are to:

- a. Provide opportunities for students to have their prior learning recognised
- b. Permit progression through a degree course in a reduced timeframe, where appropriate
- c. Grant credit up to a maximum of 160 credit points through credit transfer or RPL, where prior learning has been demonstrated to meet the relevant degree course or unit outcomes
- d. Enable flexible pathways between degree courses to contribute to life-long learning.

AIE Institute is committed to conducting fair, equitable and transparent processes for the granting of credits through credit transfer and RPL that protects the integrity of AIE Institute's higher education degree courses such that:

- e. Students are treated fairly and equitably
- f. Decisions on the award of credits are made against clear and transparent criteria to ensure consistency of outcomes
- g. Students are made aware of the grievance processes and how to appeal decisions
- h. Appeal processes apply the principles of natural justice.

3 Implementation

The Academic Director ensures that the requirements for determining credit, including maximum levels of credit, are adhered to when assessing applications for credit transfer or RPL. Students should complete at least one full year of study at AIE Institute to qualify for a degree.

Applications for credit are:

- a. Submitted digitally
- b. Offered at the time of enrolment but available also throughout the course of studies
- c. Processed in a timely manner
- d. Assessed in a fair, valid, reliable and flexible manner
- e. Decided based on evidence that is current, authentic and sufficient
- f. Recorded in a fully digital Credit Transfer and RPL register with their current status and decisions made to track
- g. Kept confidential.

Credit Transfer and RPL assessments are stored digitally and securely and maintained by Student Administration. Credit Transfer and RPL assessments utilise a range of formal and informal prior learning evidence as set out in section 4.1, as well as methods of assessments such as mapping of learning outcomes and assessments. The Credit Transfer and RPL assessment outcome is reported to relevant stakeholders for feedback. Only the Academic Director and Credit Transfer and RPL assessors have access to the data storage to keep confidentiality of the applications and comply with data privacy.

AIE Institute retains the written record of acceptance for credit transfer and RPL applications 2 years after the student ceases to be an accepted student.

A standard full-time study load is four units per semester. The minimum number to be classified as full-time is three units per semester. International students on a student visa are required to undertake a full-time study load and complete their course by the end date of their Confirmation of Enrolment (CoE). This means most international students need to be enrolled in units totalling 80 credit points in a year and at least 40 credit points a semester. If there are reasons why international students cannot study 80 credit points in a year and at least 40 credit points a semester, they need to apply to reduce their study load and have to be given approval by Academic Director. International Students need to submit a *Reduce Study Load (RSL) application* which includes a RSL Study Plan when they take leave in any semester or enrolled in less than 60 credit points across two terms.

If course credits reduce the international student's course length, AIE Institute informs the international student of the reduced course duration and issues a Confirmation of Enrolment (CoE) for the reduced duration of the course. AIE Institute also reports any change in course duration in Provider Registration and International Student Management System (PRISMS) if RPL or course credits are granted after the international student's visa is granted.

Deferment of study may be permitted for a specific period. Refer to the relevant *Admissions Policy and Procedure* for details of deferment of study for domestic and international students.

3.1 Prior learning

Prior learning may be classified as formal or informal. Formal prior learning is assessed through the Credit Transfer application process. Informal prior learning is assessed through the RPL application process.

3.1.1 Formal prior learning

Formal prior learning is acquired through formal processes such as the successful completion or partial completion of a degree course at a recognised educational institution. A recognised institution may be a tertiary institution in Australia or at a recognised international institution.

3.1.1.1 Informal prior learning

Informal prior learning is acquired through informal processes such as employer/workplace training, and through relevant work/life experience.

3.2 Articulation

Articulation pathways are developed to enable students to progress from one completed qualification to another with admission and/or credit in a defined pathway. This may be between degree courses offered at AIE Institute or for degree courses completed at other tertiary institutions.

Articulation agreements and credit arrangements are sought between AIE Institute and other institutions to document approved pathways for students to progress between the two institutions. These may include provisions for advanced standing; block credit; specified or unspecified credit, which are subject to the credit limits in this policy; or for admission into a degree course.

AIE Institute may enter into articulation agreements with other educational institutions that outline pathways between qualifications and the credit provisions that have been agreed. Articulation agreements must be consistent with the requirements of this policy. AIE Institute has an articulation agreement with AIE providing AIE Advanced Diploma students with agreed credit outcomes. Refer to *AdvDip 120CP - Articulation Arrangements AIE Institute and AIE_signed 28 January 2021* for details.

4 Procedure

Applications may be made for Credit Transfer for formal prior learning or RPL for informal prior learning. Students should enrol in the degree course and attend classes until a decision regarding credit has been made. Student enrolment may be amended based on the outcome of the Credit Transfer and RPL assessment. Application fees apply, as defined in *Fee Schedule – Domestic Students* and *Fee Schedule – International Students*.

4.1 Application for credit

All applications should be made using the *Credit Transfer Application Form* for formal prior learning and *RPL Application Form* for informal prior learning available on AIE Institute's website and pay the specified fee. Documentation must be submitted to support claims of prior learning. All documentation submitted must be in English. Students must submit the form to Student Administration staff.

All applications should be submitted at least 4 weeks before the degree course commencement date. RPL requests submitted by the submission dates are normally completed within 20 business days. During peak periods it can take up to 30 business days. Some requests may take longer to process due to the complex nature of RPL assessment. Later applications may be accepted, but may not be processed in time for credit to be granted before the nominated withdrawal/census date. For domestic students, this is the census date. Credit is granted only if the student provides evidence proving that they have obtained the skills and knowledge necessary to meet the outcomes of the degree course. This ensures that the integrity of the course is maintained.

4.1.1 Formal prior learning evidence

Students seeking credit for formal prior learning are required to fill out the *Credit Transfer Application Form* and attach certified evidence demonstrating successful completion of the unit/s of study or award. Successful completion means that a grade of 'pass' or higher must have been achieved for the unit of study. Higher education degree courses with a grade of 'pass conceded' or lower are not eligible for credit. Appropriate evidence includes, but is not limited to, certified copies of:

- a. Official academic transcripts
- b. Official academic records
- c. Official testamur or award qualification
- d. Assessment marks confirmed by the institute
- e. Institutional handbooks/degree course guides for the units under application, that include details of the unit's content, learning outcomes, and assessment details.

Subjects where credit has been granted are not included in the calculation of a student's GPA.

4.1.2 Informal prior learning evidence

Students seeking credit for informal prior learning should fill out the *RPL Application Form* and attach certified evidence demonstrating that they have acquired the prior learning under application. The onus is on the student to provide appropriate evidence. Appropriate evidence includes, but is not limited to:

- a. Reflective papers, journals or portfolios including games produced, that relate past learning to the learning outcomes of the degree course under application

- b. Resumes and referee reports that have been verified by referees
- c. Examples of the student's work drawn from the workplace, social, community or other setting
- d. Testimonials/letters regarding relevant skills or knowledge
- e. Interviews or direct observation of demonstration of relevant skills or knowledge by interview
- f. Successful completion of assessment or demonstration of capabilities relevant to AIE Institute's degree course through a challenge test
- g. Any combination of the above.

The onus is on the student to provide appropriate evidence that demonstrates knowledge, understanding and skills with documented proof of competence and prior learning in the corresponding units. The following will be taken into account:

- h. Acceptable evidence, (verified resumes and referees, and certified copies of training certificates)
- i. Interviews with the Course Coordinator and additional assessment methods to ensure that the student has the required skills and knowledge to meet the learning outcomes of the unit of study
- j. Credit is granted only if the student provides evidence proving that they have obtained the skills and knowledge necessary to meet the learning outcomes of the unit of study. This ensures that the integrity of the course is maintained.

4.2 Application checking process

The Admissions Officer checks the application form to ensure that it includes:

- a. The correct degree course and unit name/s and code/s
- b. Required evidence
- c. All required information
- d. Payment of the applicable fees.

If the application does not contain all the appropriate information, including the relevant fee, the form is returned to the student, outlining the missing information.

Complete applications are sent to the Academic Director for consideration. The Academic Director may delegate verification of evidence and assessment to a course coordinator or lecturer to make the most informed assessment.

4.3 Assessment of credit applications

After the relevant application fee is paid, the applicant may be invited to discuss the grounds of application, as well as the evidence submitted to support the application for recognition of prior learning by the Academic Director. Credit based on prior learning may be granted as specified credit, unspecified credit, block credit, or advanced standing. The granting of credit considers the following as listed in the *AQF Qualifications Pathway Policy*:

- a. Learning outcomes
- b. Volume of learning
- c. Degree course of study, including content, and learning and assessment approaches.

4.3.1 Credit limits

The type and level of credit that can be awarded to students for prior learning is dependent on the type and level of prior learning undertaken, assuming that the learning outcomes and specific degree course and unit requirements are met.

The AQF provides examples for negotiating credit agreements between institutions towards higher level AQF qualifications in the same or related discipline. These examples are to be used as a guide for the maximum limits for granting credit as follows:

- a. 50% credit for an Advanced Diploma or Associate Degree linked to a 3-year Bachelor Degree
- b. 37.5% credit for an Advanced Diploma or Associate Degree linked to a 4-year Bachelor Degree
- c. 33% credit for a Diploma linked to a 3-year Bachelor Degree
- d. 25% credit for a Diploma linked to a 4-year Bachelor Degree.

The maximum credit granted for informal prior learning from work experience should be limited to 25% of the total credit points of the entire degree course.

The Academic Board may grant credit above these limits in exceptional circumstances on a case by case basis, but must ensure that the integrity of the course is maintained.

4.3.2 Assessment process

The duration for assessing credit applications may vary depending on the complexity of the application. AIE Institute aims to finalise applications within 4 weeks, assuming that all necessary evidence has been provided with the application. When it is not possible to finalise, an initial response for credit and RPL applications will be provided to the applicant within 4 weeks. The Academic Director usually delegates assessment of all credit applications (including credit transfer and RPL) to a content expert such as the relevant course coordinator or lecturer.

Applications for credit are assessed against the evidence provided to demonstrate equivalence with the learning outcomes for which credit is sought. The Academic Director or delegate may request further information to assess the application.

In assessing an application for the granting of credit, the following factors are taken into account:

- a. The objectives, learning outcomes and requirements of a particular degree course and unit
- b. Level of entry for the award for which credit is sought
- c. The duration of the degree course
- d. Assessment methods, grades, and marks
- e. Practical training and work experience as part of the degree course, where relevant
- f. Articulation arrangements
- g. Evidence of informal prior learning
- h. Currency of the degree course or unit (less than 5 years prior to study relating to professional practice).

The assessor of the application drafts a report to the Academic Director.

4.3.3 Decisions on credit transfer and RPL applications

The Academic Director is responsible for making decisions on credit applications that are fair and transparent and adhere to the requirements of this policy and procedure. Decisions should also take into account the entry requirements of the degree course and have regard for credit precedents. A Credit Precedent Register is maintained and published. The length of time since study was undertaken is also taken into account. For example, credit is not usually granted for study undertaken more than 5 years prior due to the high rate of change in technology in this field.

Full credit is granted only where a student's knowledge/skills meet the learning outcomes and full requirements of the unit. In such cases, students are exempt from studying the unit. Credit may or may not reduce the length of a student's degree course of study.

4.3.3.1 Notification of decision

The Academic Director notifies students of the decision on a Credit Transfer or RPL application in writing, within 7 business days of receiving an assessment recommendation from the Assessor. The student is asked to respond to the decision in writing to notify AIE Institute whether they accept the decision or whether they wish to lodge an appeal.

If the application is successful, the notification outlines the degree course duration to indicate if the duration of study has been reduced. The Academic Director also notifies the Admissions Officer of the application outcome so that exemptions can be recorded on the student's file.

4.3.3.1.1 International students

If the duration of the degree course has been changed for an accepted international student as a result of the application decision, it must be reported in accordance with section 19 of the *ESOS Act*. In accordance with Standard 2 of the *National Code*:

- 2.1 *If the registered provider grants RPL or course credit to an overseas student, the registered provider must give a written record of the decision to the overseas student to accept and retain the written record of acceptance for two years after the overseas student ceases to be an accepted student.*
- 2.2 *If the registered provider grants the overseas student RPL or course credit that reduces the overseas student's course length, the provider must:*
 - 2.2.1 *inform the student of the reduced course duration following granting of RPL and ensure the confirmation of enrolment (CoE) is issued only for the reduced duration of the course*
 - 2.2.2 *report any change in course duration in PRISMS if RPL or course credit is granted after the overseas student's visa is granted.*

4.4 Assessment of Reduced Study Load Applications

International students need to apply to reduce their study load by submitting a *Reduce Study Load (RSL) application* when they take leave in any semester or enrolled in less than 60 credit points across two terms. *Reduce Study Load (RSL) application* should include a *RSL Study Plan*. The *Reduce Study Load (RSL) application* has to be approved by Academic Director. The Academic Director notifies students of the decision on a *Reduce Study Load (RSL) application* in writing, within 7 business days of receiving the application.

There are potentially serious consequences to international students' CoE and student visa when reducing their study load. Their CoE and student visa are only extended in limited circumstances and for reasons which must be documented and approved. The Student Support team will run information sessions about How to Reduce Study Load and the criteria that students need to meet.

Valid reasons or circumstances for a reduced study load are listed below:

- i. **Compassionate and compelling circumstances:** These are circumstances beyond students' control and affect their ability to attend classes and study. Supporting documentation required for this type of application is a *Professional Authority Form* completed by treating medical or health professional. Examples include:
 - I. Serious medical illness or injury to student or a close family member.
 - II. Death of a family member such as a parent or grandparent.
 - III. A major political upheaval or natural disaster in their home country requiring emergency travel or disruption to their studies.
 - IV. A traumatic experience e.g. accident or crime.
 - V. Delay in receiving their student visa.
- j. **Academic difficulties:** If student's academic standing is below Pass level, they may be advised by their academic advisor or lecturer to reduce their study load as part of an academic intervention strategy.
 - I. **Academic Intervention Strategy:** Supporting documentation required for this type of application is the *RSL Study Plan* and previously approved *Student/RSL Study Plans* for the past semesters (if any).

- II. At risk of failing a course: If students have failed assessments or are at risk of failing a course, their academic advisor or lecturer may recommend withdrawing from the course. Supporting documentation required for this type of application is the proof of failed grades or consultation trail with course coordinator e.g. email.
- k. Other academic reasons:
 - I. Core unit/s not available: Units the students require for their course or major are not offered and no other units (core or electives) are available to maintain a full enrolment of 80 credit points.
 - II. Students do not meet unit pre-requisite requirements: The AIE Institute is unable to offer a pre-requisite unit, or students have failed a prerequisite unit/s, and they are therefore unable to progress with their Student Study Plan.
 - III. Granted Credit Transfer: Students have been granted credit transfer and are ahead in their degree course.

4.5 Appeals

Students may lodge an appeal for a review of the decision if they are dissatisfied with the outcome as outlined in *Student Grievance Policy and Procedure*.

5 Definitions

Admission is the process for admitting an applicant into a course at AIE Institute, following a successful application and acceptance of the offer of a place in the course.

Admission pathway is any option available to prospective higher education students that will enable them to meet the entry requirements of their chosen courses.

Admission requirements are the requirements that an applicant must satisfy in order to be eligible for selection. Admission requirements comprise general entry requirements, including English language proficiency and course entry requirements.

Advanced standing is a form of credit for any previous learning (Australian Qualifications Framework definition) – see also the definitions for ‘credit transfer’ and ‘recognition of prior learning’.

Applicant is a person who has already lodged an application to study a specific course. A prospective student is generally a person who is thinking about lodging an application to study a particular course.

AQF Qualifications Pathway Policy is a policy that forms part of the Australian Qualifications Framework and supports students lifelong learning.

Articulation agreement is an agreement between AIE Institute and another institution to document and publicise a specifically approved pathway for progression between a degree course at the other institution and AIE Institute award degree course, involving specific credit arrangements.

Block credit is credit granted towards whole stages or components of a course of learning leading to a qualification. Reference AQF 2nd Edition.

Census date is the date when a student’s enrolment is finalised. If a student withdraws after the census date they will have to pay fees, or if the student has a FEE-HELP loan, will incur a debt.

Course is a single course leading to an Australian higher education award.

Credit is the value assigned for the recognition of equivalence in content and learning outcomes between different types of learning and/or qualifications. Credit reduces the amount of learning required to achieve a qualification and may be through credit transfer, articulation agreement, recognition of prior learning or advanced standing. Reference AQF 2nd Edition.

Credit arrangements are formal negotiated arrangements within and between issuing organisations or accrediting authorities and are about student entitlement to credit. They may also be formal arrangements made between issuing organisations and students. Reference AQF 2nd Edition.

Credit points are the value assigned to each unit. Students must complete the required number of credit points to be awarded a qualification. For example, for a 10 credit point value per unit, students must complete 240 credit points to be awarded a three-year Bachelor degree.

Credit transfer is a process used to assess an individual's relevant formal prior learning to provide students with agreed and consistent credit outcomes for components of a qualification based on identified equivalence in content and learning outcomes between matched qualifications (reference AQF 2nd edition).

Deferment is an agreement to allow an applicant to defer taking up the place they have been offered until a later time.

Direct application is an application made to a higher education provider rather than through a tertiary admission centre.

Domestic student is an Australian citizen, Australian permanent resident or a New Zealand citizen.

Education agent is a person or organisation (in or outside Australia) who recruits international students and refers them to education providers. In doing so, the education agent may provide education counselling to international students as well as marketing and promotion services to education providers.

Education agent does not refer to an education institution with whom an Australian provider has an agreement for the provision of education (that is teaching activities).

ESOS Act means the *Education Services for Overseas Students Act 2000*.

GPA means grade point average.

IELTS – [International English Language Testing System](#) is an international standardised test of [English language](#) proficiency. It is jointly managed by [University of Cambridge ESOL Examinations](#), the [British Council](#) and [IDP Education Pty Ltd](#).

International student means a person (whether within or outside Australia) who holds a student visa as defined by the ESOS Act, but does not include students of a kind prescribed in the ESOS Regulations.

National Code is the *National Code of Practice for Registration Authorities and Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students 2018* established under the *Education Services for Overseas Students (ESOS) Act 2000*.

Overseas student see International student.

PRISMS is the Provider Registration and International Student Management System (PRISMS) used to process information given to the Secretary of DET by registered providers.

Prospective student is generally a person who is thinking about lodging an application to study a particular course.

Recognition of prior learning (RPL) is a process used to assess an individual's relevant informal prior learning to determine the credit that may be granted towards completion of a qualification (adapted from Australian Qualifications Framework definition).

Specified credit is credit granted towards particular or specific components of a qualification of course of learning. Reference AQF 2nd Edition.

TAC application is an application made through a tertiary admission centre, namely QTAC, UAC, VTAC, SATAC, TISC and University of Tasmania, in relation to applications to study in that state.

TOEFL iBT is a test that measures a candidate's ability to use and understand English at the university level. It also evaluates how well you combine your reading, listening, speaking and writing skills to perform academic tasks. It is considered an industry standard in English-language assessment.

Unit is a discrete unit of study, where a combination of units make up a course of study.

Unspecified credit is credit granted towards elective components of a qualification or course of learning. Reference AQF 2nd Edition.

VET is Vocational Education and Training

6 Related documents

The following policies and procedures are related to this policy:

- a. Admissions Policy and Procedure
- b. AdvDip 120CP - Articulation Arrangements AIE Institute and AIE_signed 28 January 2021
- c. Credit Precedent Register
- d. Credit Transfer Application Form
- e. Credit Transfer and RPL register
- f. Fee Schedule – Domestic Students
- g. Fee Schedule – International Students
- h. Professional Authority Form
- i. RPL Application Form
- j. Reduce Study Load Application Form
- k. RSL Study Plan Template
- l. Refund Policy and Procedure Domestic Students
- m. Refund Policy and Procedure International Students
- n. Student Grievance Policy and Procedure
- o. Student Study Plan Template.

Other documents:

- p. AQF Qualifications Pathway Policy.
- q. Education Services for Overseas Act 2000
- r. *National Code of Practice for Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students, Standard 2*

7 Review

Three years from commencement.

8 Accountabilities

The Academic Board is responsible for review and approval of this policy.

The policy is to be implemented via induction and training of staff and distribution to students and AIE Institute's higher education community via the website and other publications.